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NEWSLETTER | December 2009

WELCOME TO THE RIGHT NETWORKS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the December 2009 Right Networks Newsletter. It is an exciting time of year and we wish you and yours the best for the season and beyond. We have a lot of new and updated offerings since our September newsletter including the launch of QuickBooks® 2010 hosting with thousands of users already upgraded. We are also now hosting Method Integration and Qvinci® (both featured below) plus NELiX® TransaX with ACH support. Also available are updated versions of Peachtree Premium and Quantum, Bill.com, BillQuick®, Xpanded Reports, and more. In addition, we continue to strengthen our integration with Thomson Virtual Office CS™. We are also proud of the continued growth in the adoption of our exclusive consolidated reporting platform by not-for-profit and franchise organizations across the U.S.

In this issue we are featuring an article by Joe Woodard, a widely-recognized QuickBooks expert, Advanced Certified QuickBooks ProAdvisor and Intuit Solution Provider who has trained over 20,000 QuickBooks users and QuickBooks consultants across the country.

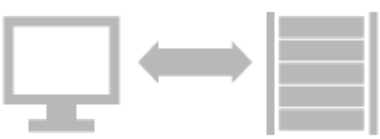
We are also featuring an article on Customer Relationship Management by Naseem Saab, President & Founder of DPS Consulting and Results Software. Naseem is a recognized pioneer in the CRM industry and office automation technologies and a national speaker and published author on CRM.

As always feedback is encouraged and we would love to hear from you. We are constantly trying to improve our services and want to be certain we are meeting your needs. We keep you in mind as we continue to improve Right Networks and want to give you the opportunity to make your voice heard. If you have any other questions about Right Networks or our offerings, please contact us.

IN THIS ISSUE

ACCOUNTANTS MUST BE TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANTS

by Joe Woodard



Accountants are their clients' most trusted business advisors, but what accounting professionals often don't expect is how many of their clients will also turn to them for technology advice. But for clients, it makes sense: Since clients ask their accountant which bookkeeping and other programs to use, they'll also turn to him or her for advice on how to use it, and how to implement the infrastructure and business processes that surround the bookkeeping software.

So if you're an accountant, guess what? You're also a small business technology consultant. And if you don't feel up to the task of providing technology consulting, you have two choices. A) You can develop the knowledge and resources in your firm to deliver technology consulting services, or B) your competitors will take clients from you who seek what you can't deliver.

This special relationship between clients and their accountants has not been missed by the accounting software vendors, either: Most of the major accounting software companies have 'accountant channels' of some sort. They also know that accounting practices often want as many of their clients as possible to use the same system, because it simplifies and streamlines client services, while reducing staff training costs.

This channel marketing strategy has its benefits for the accountants, because most vendors such as Intuit and Sage offer free or discounted software for the firms to use in-house and they provide advanced training that helps accountants be better prepared to support their client's needs by having greater knowledge on how the programs work. There are also discounts and reseller programs that provide additional revenue for accountants. Technology companies that make add-on programs that enhance QuickBooks, Peachtree and others have also joined this trend, offering many of the same benefits.

Yes, there's some quid pro quo going on and it definitely can be a revenue-enhancer for accounting firms, but this relationship ultimately benefits the client. After all, a good in-house bookkeeping application and specialty programs that enhance that system help the small business be more efficient and productive, but it also helps if their accountant knows the program and can assist with implementation and other issues. If the client's accounting and business process systems can integrate with the accountant's tax systems, then it's even more beneficial, because it makes it easier and more efficient for the firm to provide services and support for the client.

But how can your accounting practice keep up with the latest changes to those programs? And how can you find the add-on solutions that can help your clients succeed?

All of these vendors are clamoring for accountants to learn their product by providing webinars, online demos, and telemarketing activities, but it is really difficult for the firm to sort through all the different solutions and decide which ones to work with and/or recommend to their clients. This is where live conferences can really deliver for accounting firms. By focusing dozens of technology vendors into a dedicated event that lasts just a few days, the accounting firms can very efficiently learn about many different solutions in a concentrated amount of time. But how do you know which event to attend?

Vendor shows are great resources, but often fall short because they do not discuss or engage products or solutions from competing vendors. Society conferences like the AICPA's Tech+ and those for members of groups like the American Society of Women Accountants, National Society of Accountants and American Accounting Association are good shows for professionals who want to see and prepare for what the future holds and engage in networking opportunities. Likewise, the several regional and state conferences, such as those in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, give a good overview of technologies for the profession.

When it comes to technologies that small businesses use, and how accountants and consultants can become more knowledgeable and skilled with those programs, the annual conference produced by the independent Sleeter Group offers vendor-independent training, expert knowledge, networking and VAR opportunities for all of the major small business software and SaaS options.

Held this year November 9-12 in Orlando, the Next Generation Accounting Solutions Conference had more than 60 different sessions, covering virtually all aspects of QuickBooks and other small business accounting software products, in addition to third-party 'add-on' solutions. Organized by The Sleeter Group, the largest small business technology consulting network in the country, the conference included keynotes and seminars by the top accounting and technology experts in the country, including Darren Root, CPA.CITP, Randy Johnston, Leslie Shiner, Amy Vetter, CPA.CITP, Gail Perry, Greg LaFollette, CPA.CITP, and Doug Sleeter.

The conference's CPE-eligible educational sessions and exhibit hours focused on giving professional consultants and accountants actionable knowledge that can help them better serve their clients. Among the sessions offered this year, nearly all were targeted directly at accounting professionals seeking to improve their technical skills and marketing methods for improving their practices. Several sessions in the technology, consulting tools, and best practices areas provide attendees with a deep understanding of how the fact that software tools, operating systems, and related technologies work together to create an overall system is critical to succeeding as an accounting software consultant. These sessions focused on how trends in hardware, multi-media, networking, and security will change how you work with clients and what you'll recommend for their internal systems.

According to The Sleeter Group's founder, Doug Sleeter, another key theme for this year's conference is the concept of taking your practice online. Several sessions focused on how technologies are changing the whole paradigm for the accounting services business. Online applications and Web services which were once considered too slow and risky are now becoming integral to a number of business processes. From payroll, to A/P, to document management and even inventory management, the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) world is changing the whole landscape of solutions for your clients and how you collaborate with them. These sessions demonstrated practical ways to take advantage of these new solutions to grow your revenues by providing new and better services for your clients.

As technologies are quickly emerging and business processes are evolving, the opportunities are endless. Several marketing, management and business development sessions help accountants understand the opportunities for developing and managing their practice to prepare for the 'next generation' of clients. Whether just starting out, or are ready to take their business to the next level, attendees benefitted from the experience of successful professionals who presented tips and techniques for success in the lucrative market for accounting technology consulting.

Another key to success is in knowing where to specialize and focus your services. Every industry has its own vocabulary, methods and processes specific to the business. By specializing your practice, you'll be better prepared to efficiently work with clients in your chosen specialty. At this conference, several leading industry experts share insights from their experience to help you navigate through the marketplace. These sessions focused on some of the key technologies and methodologies needed by vertical markets such as Point-of-Sale, Not-for-Profit, and Construction.

No conference focused on small business accounting would be complete without a full set of sessions from Intuit. The Intuit Academy training sessions, presented by Intuit product managers and Certified QuickBooks ProAdvisors focused on what's new in QuickBooks and dived deeply into Premier Accountant Edition, Client Data Review, and Intuit Statement Writer. In addition, Intuit gave details about new Intuit Payroll options, Intuit Payment Solutions, and the QuickBooks ProAdvisor Program.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CRM TO MANAGE AND GROW YOUR BUSINESS

by Naseem Saab

Once considered a luxury reserved for large enterprises, CRM software has become a critical component for success that is accessible to all business. CRM provides firms with reliable & centralized data, competitive marketing advantages and improved client satisfaction. Having the right CRM in place is a key ingredient to manage and grow a successful business.

What is CRM? (Customer/Client Relationship Management)

Businesses need to have client information readily available that is complete and up-to-date. This information must include details on pending and past business transactions, sales inquiries, communications, as well as any client problems and how they were resolved. Firms used to consider this type of centralized and comprehensive information source a desirable option. Now it is considered a business necessity. As the speed of business increases and the amount of information grows, businesses are forced to do more and more with even fewer resources making CRM software a critical component for success.

Benefits of CRM

A CRM system is only as valuable as the information it contains, and the ease with which the information can be accessed when needed. That being the case, a good CRM must first and foremost be well designed and easily navigated. Your CRM system becomes the source of knowledge that tells you what have been your most valuable business sources, and where you should focus your marketing efforts. Whenever you pick up the phone your CRM system becomes your information hub, where you go to immediately know who it is on the line, how you know them, what they were promised, what was delivered and whether it's all been paid for. With a good CRM, businesses can expect to increase sales, reduce costs and improve cash flow. Once you have centralized all of your client information, sales opportunities, documents and communications history the CRM provides business continuity and makes information a truly valuable business asset. Hosted CRM adds the advantage of being accessible anytime, from anywhere.

CRM Integration

No one needs a case study to tell them that it's time-consuming and even frustrating to search for a particular email or document. Add to that the problem when it's on someone else's PC or might have been archived or deleted. When the CRM system integrates with Outlook and also has a Document Management capability you have an almost complete contact record, with all of your client-related emails, documents and notes in one place. The time savings and improvement in client service are significant once you eliminate the need to look in different places for all the client-related information.

Staff Accountants and Bookkeepers report that too much of their time is spent preparing QuickBooks reports for Sales and Management personnel. And Sales and Management complain that the account information they have is rarely up-to-date enough because they have to wait for Accounting to provide periodic reports. A CRM system that properly integrates with QuickBooks will give everyone in the organization visibility to the data they need, without giving them access to the books.

When a CRM Solution is designed to be fully integrated with both Outlook and QuickBooks, the CRM system becomes all-encompassing to the data that matters from communications, to operations to finance. CRM empowers firms to respond to client requests and sales opportunities with great speed and efficiency, regardless of whether they are a small business or the largest, most well-staffed corporation.

Conclusion

CRM can provide firms with competitive advantages and improved customer/client satisfaction - two things that are particularly important to grow your business. Consider the benefits to your firm and to your clients' firms in implementing an integrated CRM solution, and the impact that this would have on the business.

WEBINARS FEATURING RIGHT NETWORKS

Webinars Featuring Right Networks

- **Taking Your Practice Online - The Best Way to Handle this Important Transition**
  Presented by Joe Woodard, January 19, 2010, 1pm ET - sign up

FEATURED PARTNER: METHOD INTEGRATION

Method is a new, exciting product from an industry leader in QuickBooks add-ons. Method is the first and only web-based, do-it-yourself management system that synchronizes each list and transaction from QuickBooks in real-time! This means that any web browser can view, add, and edit QuickBooks data from anywhere in the world, and have it instantly sync back and forth with your QuickBooks data. Create your own screens, tables, fields, actions, applications and portals. You can start from scratch or customize starter templates to suit your clients' needs. Some starter template examples are CRM, Customer Center, Employee Center, and Vendor Center. You can also customize industry-specific applications. Some examples are field services, construction, manufacturing, and property management. In addition, you can create Third Party Portals so that vendors, sales reps and customers can log in and see their own 'My Account'. All customization is drag & drop and wizard based with no programming required!

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FEATURED PARTNER: QVINCI

Qvinci® is the small business management dashboard solution. Qvinci combines QuickBooks® data with Excel® operational data into a single dashboard allowing the user to display meaningful information from disparate systems. The solution coordinates the efforts of QuickBooks users and non-users aross the company by allowing employees to share data and dashboards. Qvinci uses early warning indicators, forward-looking tools, and an analytics engine to help small businesses understand their business trends. Qvinci is the missing piece that small businesses and ProAdvisors need. Qvinci is not an accounting tool but rather a management solution that improves business information visibility as well as decision-making.

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TIPS & TRICKS

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- **There are several useful keyboard shortcuts** designed especially to help you use the hosted environment and easily switch between local and hosted desktop.
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